UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations concludes Bosnian Serbs responsible for mortar attack on Sarajevo; says appropriate action will be taken.

* Security Council requests Secretary-General to establish international commission of inquiry to investigate 1993 coup attempt in Burundi and ensuing massacres.

* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees meets Prime Minister of Zaire to discuss situation in refugee camps.

* Parliamentarians meet at Headquarters to discuss ways to reinvigorate United Nations.

* Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination against Minorities adopts series of resolutions to promote human rights.

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The United Nations has concluded beyond all reasonable doubt that Bosnian Serbs were responsible for yesterday's mortar attack on downtown Sarajevo. After a thorough investigation, the United Nations Protection Force in the Former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) and General Rupert Smith, UNPROFOR Force Commander, concluded that the shells were fired from Bosnian Serb positions. According to a United Nations Spokesman, active consultations are underway among United Nations ground commanders. All options are being examined and appropriate action will be taken.

The attack, the worst in Sarajevo since February 1994, killed over 30 people and injured more than 80. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has joined the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in the former Yugoslavia in condemning the attack. The ICRC's medical delegate in Sarajevo has delivered emergency supplies of intravenous fluids, disinfectants, antibiotics, tetanus vaccine and dressing materials to the main hospitals to assist the victims.

A total of 1,746 firing incidents were recorded in Sarajevo on Monday. Today Sarajevo was described as extremely quiet.

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For information media—not an official record

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The Security Council has requested the Secretary-General to urgently establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate the assassination of the President of Burundi on 21 October 1993 and the massacres and violence that followed. By unanimously adopting resolution 1012 (1995) Monday evening, the Council recommended that the commission be composed of five impartial and internationally respected jurists to be selected by the Secretary-General and furnished with adequate support staff.

The commission was also mandated to recommend measures of a legal, political or administrative nature, after consulting with the Government of Burundi, to bring to justice those responsible for those acts. Its recommendations would be aimed at preventing any repetition of the violence, helping to eradicate impunity and promote national reconciliation in Burundi.

The Council called upon the Burundi authorities and institutions, including all Burundi political parties, to cooperate fully with the commission, particularly in the areas of security, assistance, freedom of movement and access in pursuing investigations. It called on all States, United Nations bodies and international humanitarian organizations to collate and make available any substantiated information relevant to the inquiry.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the commission's work within three months of its establishment and to submit a final report when it completes its work. It further requested him to provide adequate security for the commission, in cooperation with the Government of Burundi. The Secretary-General was also requested to establish a trust fund to receive voluntary contributions to finance the commission, as a supplement to financing it as an expense of the Organization.

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Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), today met in Geneva with the Prime Minister of Zaire to discuss the situation in the refugee camps. According to a United Nations Spokesman, she indicated the continuing position of UNHCR that the forcible return of refugees would not solve the problem. She would begin her mission to the region on Wednesday, as requested by the Secretary-General, to look into ways to promote and facilitate voluntary repatriation.

The Prime Minister of Zaire held a press conference in Geneva today in which he indicated that there was a 31 December deadline for the repatriation of the refugees, after which Zaire would resume forcible returns. UNHCR's position was that while the agency was fully committed to mobilizing all the resources and support necessary for voluntary repatriation, the High Commissioner could not commit herself to any rigid time-frame.

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In other news, it was announced today that Judge Richard Goldstone, the Prosecutor for the International Tribunal for Rwanda, would travel to Rwanda on Wednesday. He has been instructed by the Secretary-General to take every step to speed up the process of setting up the Tribunal so that those who masterminded the genocide could be brought to justice.

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Members of parliaments from over 70 countries are meeting this week at Headquarters to discuss ways to meet the main challenges facing the international community, to reinvigorate the United Nations system and to increase the involvement of parliamentarians in United Nations activities.

The Secretary-General will address the opening ceremony of the three-day meeting, which begins at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday in the General Assembly Hall. Also speaking will be Ahmed Fathy Sorour, President of the Egyptian People's Assembly and President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council. Australian Ambassador Richard Butler, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, will be the guest speaker.

The conference, which will end on Friday with the adoption of a final declaration, is organized by the 135-member Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is being held at Headquarters at the invitation of the Secretary-General to commemorate the United Nations' fiftieth anniversary.

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The Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Geneva has adopted a number of resolutions expressing concern over human rights violations and calling for enhanced measures to protect human rights. It also decided to take no action on a draft resolution on nuclear tests and the enjoyment of human rights, which would have expressed concern about the French Government's announcement to carry out tests in the Pacific Ocean.

The areas in which resolutions were adopted included: traditional practices affecting the health of women and children; HIV and AIDS; forced evictions; anti-personnel land-mines; human rights and the environment; the right to adequate housing; the human rights of women and the girl child; human rights and extreme poverty; human rights and structural adjustment; and discrimination against indigenous peoples.

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Note: Due to technical problems, three lines from the first paragraph in yesterday's Daily Highlights were inadvertently deleted. The first paragraph should have read as follows:

"Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has condemned today's shelling of downtown Sarajevo, which killed an estimated 33 innocent civilians and injured 74 others. He has called on the military commanders on the ground to investigate the attack immediately and to take appropriate action without delay. In a statement, the Secretary-General expressed outrage that such an attack had occurred in an area where there was no military target. He said the continued and senseless shedding of blood in Bosnia and Herzegovina was totally unacceptable."